

"God's No-Doze!"

Text: Esther 6:1, "On that night the king could not sleep; and he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king."

(Illustration of John Smith & church members trying to scare him into reform)
Now this is a good example of what the poet Robert Burns once said when he penned the immortal words, "The best laid plan of mice and men often goes awry." The scripture we read this morning ~~xxx~~ is another example of the same thing. Last Sunday we looked at the plot of Haman to destroy all of the Jews, and we are looking today at what transpired shortly after Haman had set his plan into motion.

We read where the king, unable to sleep, decided to do some reading to perhaps make himself sleepy. The book he chose to have read to him was the book of events of what had been happening in his kingdom. It was sort of like reading and reminiscing with an old scrapbook. From this book is read an incident that had slipped his mind. This involved Mordecai getting the information to him that there was a plot underfoot to kill him, and thus he was able to have the two perpetrators of that plot arrested and hung. The king in reminiscing over this inquires of his servants if Mordecai had been properly rewarded for this. The servants who were aware of all that went on in the palace inform the king that nothing had been done to reward Mordecai.

Now it so happened that Haman had come to ~~the~~ court early that morning, and the king inquired of his servants who was in the court so that he could check into this matter and properly reward Mordecai. The servants answer that it is the Prime Minister Haman, and the king ~~sends for him~~ summons him to a conference. Haman stands before the king and the king asks, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" Haman who is already impressed with his self-importance, naturally thinks the king is referring to him. And he remarks to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" Thus he gives the king instructions as to what should be done, thinking all along that these honors are going to be heaped upon him.

But can you imagine the shock that Haman must have felt, and the sense of utter disappointment, when the king informs him that these honors are to be bestowed upon Mordecai? Imagine that? Mordecai the Jew, the only person in the king's court who does not and will not bow to him, Haman the Prime Minister of the kingdom?

This lesson would remind us of the time when Jesus was speaking to his followers and he told them that when they went to a banquet, they should not sit at the head of the table, but they should instead take a place of low rank. Then if they perchance are to be an honored guest, the host will send for them and have them seated in a place of prominence. This would save them embarrassment from sitting in a place of distinction and then perhaps being asked to move to a lower rank. And this is the exact position in which Haman found himself at this time.

So poor Haman could do nothing else but swallow his pride and make the necessary arrangements to have Mordecai honored in the very manner that he had prescribed to take place. We then read at the end of this chapter of Haman returning to his home, mourning the fact that he was no longer the number 1 man of the king, and that he was not the exclusive VIP in the sight of all the other king's servants. His wife and advisers instead of sympathizing with him and soothing his injured pride, rub salt into his wounds by predicting that this episode could very well be the beginning of the end for Haman. They advise him that perhaps ~~his~~ his little world was about to come crumbling down around his ears. That the very people he deliberately set out to destroy and wipe from the face of the earth, could very easily end up destroying him. You may read for yourselves the remaining portion of this story and see what does happen to Haman. This book is made up of 10 short chapters and it is rather fascinating reading.

But here we are confronted with a rather unique set of events. What started out to be a very simple plan to exterminate a pest to one individual and to ward off others from this group becoming as loathsome, has now thickened into a plot of mystery and intrigue. But when we analyse the events of

this story we can see very plainly the hand of Almighty God in the background, using very simple means to accomplish the overthrow of Satan and evil against His people.

At the very beginning of this chapter we see something so simple and unspectacular that we are prone to overlook it completely. The first verse reads, "On that night the king could not sleep." The king could not sleep. How simple and yet how profound. In most instances and in the minds of most people this does not say much. When we look at the sleeplessness of a king it doesn't have too much effect on us. Here is an individual with wealth and power, with position and with prestige, and he is afflicted with a common malady that probably effected many of his people. And with this we are tempted to say, "So what? Is it coincidence? Is it merely an example of a monarch with insomnia?"

I think not. I see in this an example of how God will step into the life of a person and cause his plan to be set in motion. I am sure we have all seen the commercial on television that advertises the pills that a person can take when driving to stay awake, called No-Doze. Well, here is an example of God's No-Doze. It isn't a pill or a tablet, it is merely God stepping in and disturbing a person's sleep. When we contemplate that God does not need to always do large and spectacular things to accomplish His purpose, we cannot help but be overawed at His power and majesty. A Dr. Murray wrote a poem about this and he writes,

(Illustration of The Power of God)

There may be emperors and rulers, there may always be kings such as the king of Persia in the time of Esther. But rulers and kings come and go, but there always will be God. And God will always step in to work His purpose out. God has disturbed the sleep of people too numerous to mention. In each instance there was a set meaning and a set purpose that was shown through the lives of the people involved.

(Illustration of woman letting go)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God,
who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST JUNE 16, 1974
FATHER'S DAY

REV. RALPH C. LINK, MINISTER
MRS. VELMA COLLINS, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
FAM FRY, ELLEN MASTER - ADOLYTER

ORDER OF WORSHIP 10:00 A.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: "PRELUDE IN E" BACH
"ALLEGRETTO" LYNES

SILENT PRAYER

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 314 "HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION"

*ACSCRIPTION - CHORAL AMEN

*EXHORTATION

*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "O GOD, WHO HAS GIVEN US THE POWER
TO DISCERN GOOD FROM EVIL, HEAR US AS WE CONFESS OUR SINS.
WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE FAILED THEE AND OURSELVES. REGARDLESS
OF HOW GOOD WE HAVE BEEN, WE REALIZE THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN
THE KIND OF PERSON THAT YOU WANT US TO BE. SOMETIMES OUR
BELIEF IN OUR OWN GOODNESS HAS PREVENTED US FROM SEEING
OUR SINFULNESS. WE HAVE FELT THAT ACKNOWLEDGING YOU HAS
MADE US BETTER THAN OTHERS. OPEN OUR EYES, O LORD, TO
OUR HIDDEN SINS, AS WE MAKE A SINCERE AND HUMBLE CONFESSION
IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. AMEN."

*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN

*PRAISE

*PASTOR: "O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS."

*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE.

*DOXOLOGY No. 551

SCRIPTURE LESSON: ESTHER 6
HYMN No. 198 "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD"

*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREEN)

*GLORIA PATRI

*CALL TO PRAYER

*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.

*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE

*OFFERING

OFFERTORY: "ADAGIO SOSTENUTO" SCOTT
SOLO: "GOD'S NO-DOZE!" CYNTHIE SYBERT

SERMON: "GOD'S NO-DOZE!"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 292 "ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS"

*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN

ORGAN POSTLUDE: "RECESSIONAL" D'AUDEL

----- *CONGREGATION STANDING -----

THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY

MR. & MRS. DAVE CURTIS IN MEMORY OF "LOVED ONES"

SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *DON KINGSLEY, DARYL

TAIT, JOHN DREHER, GARY FENAR.

DEACON AND MRS. MIKE NAZARUK WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL
AT THE DOOR TODAY.

NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY MRS. MARGARET COVERT
AND FAULA STEPHENSON.

HOSPITALIZED: MRS. HERMAN CUSTEAD, MRS. MARTHA
DEREWESKI, DOMH. MRS. JOAN VOGEL - FREG. HOSP. PITTS.

IF YOU ARE VISITING WITH US TODAY BE SURE AND SIGN

THE GUEST REGISTER ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE SANCTUARY.

DON'T FORGET TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MR. & MRS. BRUCE
MCGRIDE 263-8980 FOR RESERVATIONS IF YOU PLAN TO
GO CAMPING AUG. 9, 10, 11 - THIS FAMILY CAMPING DAY
IS OPEN TO THE ENTIRE CHURCH.

ARC - PROGRAMS FOR THE YEAR ARE AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE
PLEASE PICK YOUR COPY UP.

THE RESPONSE TO THE TAPES HAS BEEN TREMENDOUS - MANY
HAVE BEEN PLACED AS MEMORIALS, OTHERS BOUGHT TO BE
PLACED IN HOMES OF SHUT-INS. MEMORIALS WILL BE
PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER FOR AUGUST.

HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR CONFIRMATION CLASS AND/OR
CONFIRMATION CAMP?

THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY WAS 185.

CONGRATULATIONS! TO TERRY MCCARRAH - HE IS NOW
OFFICIALLY SIGNED WITH THE PIRATES. - GOOD LUCK.

THEOS PROGRAM COMING TO BUTLER. THERE IS A DEFINITE
NEED FOR A SPIRITUALLY ENRICHED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
FOR THE WIDOWED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CHURCH.
LOOKING TOWARD THIS GOAL, AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL GROUP
CALLED THEOS IS BEING ORGANIZED IN BUTLER. IT WILL
BE SPONSORED BY ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH WITH THE
CO-OPERATION OF MANY CHURCHES. FIRST MEETING JUNE 20,
AT 8:00 P.M. ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH BASEMENT.

() FURTHER INFO FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE ()

Very peop be deliberate set destroy, very easily 2/
and up destroy him.
U may read remain portion book find out happen to
H. an.

Only 10 chaps & fascinating reading

Here we confront unique set events
wh start out simple plan exterminate pest to 1
inadv & ward off others of group become loathsome,
now thickened into plot of mystery intrigue

When we analyse events this story we C plainly hand
of Al. God in backgr, using simple means accomplish
overthrow Satan & evil against His peop.
At beg. chap we C something spectacular we prone
overlook completely.

1st vs reads, "On that night the king could not sleep
King could not sleep.

How simple, yet how profound

Most instances, most people minds not say much
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effect on us.

Here an indiv wealth, power, position, prestige,
& he afflicted common malady effect many his peop.

We tempted say, "So what?"

Is it coincidence?

Is merely monarch with insomnia?

I think not. I see in this examp how God will step
into life of person & cause His plan be set in motion
I sure all seen commercial TV advertise pills when
drive no get sleepy, No-Doze.

Here an examp God's No-Doze.

It not pill or tablet,

It merely God step in & disturb person sleep

When we contemplate that God does not need always do
large things, spectacular things accomplish purpose,
we cannot help be overawed His power & majesty.

Dr. Murrey write poem about this,
(Illustration power of God)

There may be emps & rulers, may always be kings
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orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the
chronicles, and they were read before the king."

(Illustration of church members trying to reform man
This good examp Rob. Burns quote, "The best laid
plans of mice and men often go awry."

Scrip read morn, nother examp of this

Leat Sun we look plot Haman destroy all Jews,
& today we look what transpire after Haman set plan
in motion

We read king unable sleep, decide read, make sleepy
book he chose read, book events happening kingdom,
like read reminisce scrapbook.

From book servant read incident slip king mind

This involve Mord. get info to king about plot

kill king, king kill 2 perpetrators

The king ask servants if Mord reward for this,
They tell no

Now Haman came court early that morn

King ask who there, told Haman

King call in Haman, Prime Minister to conference

Haman stand before king, king ask,

"What shall be done to the man whom the king de-
lights to honor?"

Haman impressed with self-importance, naturally im-
pressed with self, thinks king means him.

He say self, "Whom would the king delight to honor
more than me?"

So as give king instructions what he think should be
done, think all along honors belong to him.

Can U imagine shock Haman felt, & sense disappoint
when he discover man Mord?

Imagine that? Mord the Jew, only pers in king
court who no bow to him.

This ~~affront~~ nerve to ignore Prime Min. Haman

This lesson remind us story Js tell follow about
banquet & take low seat, perhaps be honored

This exact position Haman find self this time.

Poor Haman can only swallow pride see Mord honored
then read and chap Haman go home mourn fact he no
onger #1 man in kingdom, he not exclusive VIP

Wife & advisers instead sympathize, rub salt in
wounds, predict perhaps little world tumble around
ears.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.